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Understanding perceptions of the cervical screening programme and HPV among 50-64 year olds

Women aged 50-64 are invited for cervical screening every five years however uptake among this age group is declining and among women aged 60-64 has reached an 18-year low. Worryingly the NHSCSP Audit of invasive Cervical Cancer national report in 2007-10

(http://www.wolfson.qmul.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_zoo&task=item&item_id=3&Itemid=809)

found 56% of women aged 50-64 with fully invasive cancer hadn't been screened within seven years, compared to only 16% of women without cervical cancer.

In May 2015 we commissioned a study to explore knowledge of cervical cancer and barriers to screening for women aged 50 to 64. The findings were launched during Cervical Screening Awareness Week (jostrust.org.uk/csaw) 2015 alongside calls for more investment in research to explore the feasibility of introducing HPV self-sampling as part of the NHS cervical screening programme.

The survey, which was conducted by Censuswide, sampled 1,519 women aged 50 to 64. 764 had previously delayed cervical screening and 755 had never delayed.

The results found significant knowledge gaps amongst this group and a range of barriers to attending screening.

Key findings:

- Almost two thirds (60%) of women aged 50-64 did not know the Human papillomavirus (HPV) causes almost all cases of cervical cancer and many failed to link historic sexual activity as a threat to the virus laying dormant and potentially developing into cervical cancer later in life
- 29.1% found the test painful since growing older with 24.4% experiencing pain since going through the menopause
- 53.9% of those who had delayed cervical screening said they would prefer to self-sample at home, compared to only 20.5% of those that hadn't delayed screening

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- 22.5% said cervical cancer was a disease most likely to affect women aged 25-34 which suggests many associated it as a predominately young person's cancer
- 40.1% didn't think smear tests are part of the healthy upkeep of a woman's body and 24.6% thought them an unnecessary health test for all women

See full survey results > (/sites/default/files/over_50s_survey_2015.pdf)

Read the press release on the survey > (<https://www.jostrust.org.uk/node/20065>)

Read more research > (<https://www.jostrust.org.uk/about-us/our-research-and-policy-work/our-research>)



Our information

If you or someone you know has questions about HPV, cervical screening, cell changes or cervical cancer, we can help.

Read information (<https://www.jostrust.org.uk/information>)

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Our policy work

We are campaigning to reduce the impact of cervical cancer across the UK.

Find out more (<https://www.jostrust.org.uk/about-us/our-research-and-policy-work/our-policy-work>)

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Charity Information

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